

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN IRISH INDEPENDENT, JUNE 17, 1977

THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN IRISH INDEPENDENT
ON JUNE 17, UNDER HEADING MODERATE SPAIN:

THE SPANISH ELECTIONS, WHICH HAVE JUST CONCLUDED, LEAVE
NO ONE IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE POLITICAL WISHES OF THE
PEOPLE OF SPAIN. BRAVING THE RISK OF BOMBINGS - AND
THERE WERE SOME INCIDENTS ON POLLING DAY - THEY QUEUED
UP ON LARGE NUMBERS TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS IN THE FIRST
FREE VOTE IN OVER 40 YEARS AND CAME DOWN OVERWHELMINGLY
IN FAVOUR OF A MODERATE STANCE IN POLITICS. THIS
RESULT HAS GIVEN THE LIE TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO CLAIMED
THAT SPAIN WAS JUST READY TO TURN RED.

THE RESULT WILL ALSO CAUSE DIPLOMATS AROUND EUROPE, AND
ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE EEC, TO HEAVE A SIGH OF RELIEF:
FOR THE PROSPECT - AS IT SEEMED FOR A TIME - OF A
BITTERLY DIVIDED SPAIN TRYING TO ENTER THE COMMON
MARKET AND BRINGING IN HER TRAIN A HOST OF PROBLEMS
WAS NOT A PLEASANT ONE TO CONTEMPLATE. AND EVEN WITH
THIS RESULT SPAIN IS BY NO MEANS OVER HER INITIAL
DIFFICULTIES.
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THERE IS EVIDENCE - IF IT WAS EVER NEEDED - THAT FIRST
OF ALL THE COMMUNISTS ARE NOT AS POPULAR AS THEIR
EXTREMELY CLEVER PROPAGANDA SUGGESTED; THAT SECONDLY
THE FALANGISTS ARE NO LONGER A POLITICAL FORCE IN
SPAIN AND THIRDLY THAT THE FORM OF SOCIALISM SOUGHT
BY SPANIARDS IS NOT AN EXTREME ONE. WITH THESE

PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATION SORTED OUT SPAIN CAN GET
DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT AND
GETTING ITSELF RULED PROPERLY FOR THE FIRST TIME
SINCE FRANCO CAME TO POWER.

BUT ELECTIONS DO NOT REMOVE ALL THE PROBLEMS SPAIN
HAS, NOR COULD THEY BE EXPECTED TO DO SO. BASQUE
AND CATALONIAN NATIONALISTS HAVE ONCE AGAIN
DEMONSTRATED THEIR DESIRE FOR A FORM OF AUTONOMY
WHICH HAS YET TO BE WORKED OUT - THERE ARE TIMES WHEN
THE BASQUES WOULD SEEM TO BE SATISFIED WITH NOTHING
LESS THAN FULL INDEPENDENCE. AND IN EACH REGION
THERE ARE THE GUNMEN AND THEIR TOLL OF VICTIMS TO
RECKON WITH, AS WELL AS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SPAIN HAS A
PERMANENT CORE OF ANARCHISTS WHOSE DOCTRINES, IF THEY
CAN BE CALLED SUCH, HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY
FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

WHAT MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED THROUGHOUT EUROPE IS THE
SWIFT TRANSITION UNDER THE NEW KING OF SPANISH
POLITICS FROM RIGID AUTHORITARIANISM THROUGH THE
UNCERTAIN INTERIM MONTHS TO THE PRESENT SITUATION
WHERE A MAJORITY OF SPANIARDS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO
COME OUT IN THE OPEN AND DECLARE THEIR VIEW THAT
SPAIN NEEDS MODERATION IN GOVERNMENT. IT IS A
NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT AND IT MUST NOW BE HOPED THAT
SPAIN'S EXTREMISTS WILL ACCEPT THE LESSONS OF THE
POLLS AND LIVE BY THE LAW.

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AND THE ELECTIONS CAN ONLY HAVE A GOOD EFFECT ON
SPAIN'S SLUGGISH TOURIST INDUSTRY; PEOPLE WILL NOT
BE AFRAID TO VISIT A COUNTRY WHICH HAS SHOWN SUCH
MODERATION. KRENE

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